



Charlotte Mason's House of Education,
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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P.N.E.U. NOTES.

Edited by Miss FRANCES BLOGG, Sec., 28, Victoria Street, S.W.

To whom all Hon. Local Secs. are requested to send reports of all matters of interest connected with their branches, also 30 copies of any prospectuses or other papers they may print.

NEW BRANCHES.

The Executive Committee has been approached with a view to starting Branches in the following places:—

BRADFORD.
MANCHESTER.
CHICHESTER.
COLCHESTER.—Hon. Sec., *pro tem.*, Mrs. Powell, Gt. Bentley Vicarage.
NOTTINGHAM.
BLACKHEATH.—Hon. Sec., Miss Grace Martin, "Rydal," Hardy Road.
CROYDON.
STREATHAM.
BECKENHAM.
CARLISLE.
FOREST HILL.
ENFIELD.
DOVER.
BRUSSELS.
OXFORD.
TRURO.
EXETER.
TAUNTON.
LEAMINGTON.
LEICESTER.
TUNBRIDGE WELLS.
BOURNEMOUTH.

Readers of the *Parents' Review* living in these districts, or having friends there, are asked to communicate with Miss Blogg.

HYDE PARK AND BAYSWATER. Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Franklin, 9, Pembridge Gardens, W. (at home Thursday mornings).—The following provisional arrangements have been made:—October 25th, at 5.30, at 86, Westbourne Terrace (by kind permission of Mrs. Hall), a lecture will be given by the Hon. Canon E. Lyttleton. Tea and coffee 5 o'clock.—November 25th, at 5, Sussex Square (by kind permission of Mrs. Norman), Mrs. Clement Parsons will lecture on "Romance and Childhood." Mr. A. C. P. Coote in the chair.—In December, Dr. Schorstein will lecture on "Signs of Overpressure."—Classes for French (Madlle. Duriaux), Slöyd, brush-painting, basket work and Swedish drill have been arranged. A reading circle to read and discuss *Parents and Children* will meet at 9, Pembridge Gardens, on Mondays, at 4.30. Readings to children's nurses will be conducted at the same address on Tuesdays, at 8.30, by a student of the "House of Education." Names should be sent in at once.

THE PARENTS' REVIEW

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE
OF HOME-TRAINING AND CULTURE.

"Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life."

ENTHUSIASM.*

BY MRS. BOLDERO.

"Where there is no vision the people perish."—*Proverbs xxix.*

..... "The fresh to-morrow morn
Seems to give forth its light in very scorn,
Of our dull, uninspired, snail-paced lives."

Keats.

MANY years ago the epithet "Enthusiast" was thrown at me in the heat of an argument by one much older than myself, who considered that the great desideratum in any character was to be unemotional. No one likes to be called names, especially when one is not quite sure of the meaning of them, and I recollect feeling somewhat indignant and aggrieved, as I had then the prevailing vague idea that the term described an extravagant and foolish person. But I have ever since been grateful to my persecutor for I discovered the true meaning and value of Enthusiasm, and can wish for nothing better than to live and die an Enthusiast.

There is probably no quality pertaining to human nature that has had so great an influence in shaping the history of mankind as Enthusiasm. Fanaticism, pride, ambition, have played their part in the world's great drama, and no doubt have effected considerable achievements; but Enthusiasm has swayed the hearts of nations and determined the lives and characters of individuals more powerfully and more permanently than any other quality with which the mind of

* Read at a meeting of the Parents' National Educational Union at Folkestone, May, 1897.

man is endowed; it is one of the most precious possessions of the human being, and should therefore be carefully considered as a factor in the life of the individual no less than in the lives of nations, in any far-reaching and well devised scheme of education, both in its nature, and the conditions of its development and activity, now in all its resistless energy, and again in the harmonious well-balanced force of character which constitutes true Enthusiasm.

But what is this Enthusiasm? People talk of Enthusiasm chiefly as it concerns others, mostly in praise or dispraise, while probably few take the trouble to understand or realise the full meaning and force of the ideas indicated by the word. Looseness of thought engenders looseness of expression, and there are perhaps few words which have suffered as this word Enthusiasm has suffered, through being incorrectly or carelessly used as synonymous with another word—allied to it, indeed—but whose meaning is quite distinct—I mean fanaticism.

As our words are the embodiment of our thoughts, it will be well to gain a true idea of what the quality denoted by the word Enthusiasm really is; and to dispel confusion it will be necessary to contrast the two words, first as to their derivation, and then as to their respective meanings, deduced from historical examples of each. The word Enthusiasm comes from the Greek. It is originally derived from *Entheos* (*ενθεος*), literally, "full of the God." Thence "inspired." This word became contracted into "*enthous*" (*ενθους*). Thence comes the verb *enthousiazēin* (*enthousiazēin*), "to be possessed by the god," to be "inspired," and from this is derived the word *enthousiasmos*, whose equivalent in English is enthusiasm.

Fanaticism, on the other hand, is of Latin origin. It is derived from *fanum*, a fane or temple, and thence comes *fanaticus*, the priest or devotee of the temple, the English equivalent being fanatic. There is nothing in the derivation of the Latin word fanaticism to indicate its present meaning and use, as in the case of the Greek word Enthusiasm. A devotee of the temple, which is the strict rendering of the word fanatic, does not in the least convey its accepted usage; a "fanatic," by present universal acceptance, is one who has wild and extravagant religious notions, one whose devotion in the sacred fane has wrought in him an excitement which has

passed to delusion, superstition, fervour, and frenzy—the ultimate stage of fanaticism. In fact one may call an enthusiast one possessed by God, and a fanatic one possessed by frenzy.

Webster tells us that "Enthusiasm was formerly used to denote heat of imagination on religious subjects": but he says "this sense is now commonly restricted to fanaticism which denotes extravagant ideason thesesubjects, often leading to the most dangerous delusions." It is as if the word Enthusiasm, carrying with it the notion of fervour and possession by superhuman power, had been borrowed and made use of to do duty for another word, whose meaning was not apparent, and thus forcibly detached from its proper surroundings.

On the other hand, the derivation of the word Enthusiasm discloses the true and only meaning which properly belongs to it, and the meaning is simple and clear: "Full of the God": "inspired": the word, and the idea attached thereto, worthy of the noble language to which they belong: *en-theos*, the God within the mortal. But the word originated in ancient times, and therefore its interpretation and full significance must be sought in the light of the knowledge and beliefs of those days. The mythology of the ancient Greeks is too well known to require any description here. But the gods of the Greeks simply indicate a subdivision of what we understand as "the Deity," nor does this detract in the least from the beauty and appropriateness of the conception, *the entheos*. If the gods were many, each in his own domain was supreme; if the ancient Greek mind sought for a plurality of deities to account for and represent a plurality of superhuman effects, the central idea of possession and inspiration by a superhuman power, a God, remains. Yet, alongside the ancient Greek and in the same age, the Hebrew mind found *one* Deity to satisfy all its requirements; and one originator and controller of all things that were superhuman was enough for it.

The Hebrew had his *entheos*, he could be full of and inspired by his *one* God, the monotheistic Hebrew was enthusiastic as was the polytheistic Greek. And so to this day, and with us, remains the "*Enthous*," the indwelling and inspiration of *one* God, kindling in us and filling us with fervour of soul. God within, inciting, inspiring, and directing every great and enduring work that has ever been or ever will be accomplished.

As the ever-widening ripples spread out over the surface of the water from the central spot where the pebble falls, so a word dropped into a language surely spreads its meanings in evergrowing and widening circles: thus the sense of the central "enthous" has widened—relevancy fading as the distance from the centre grows.

Diverging from the central idea of the "enthous," possession by a higher influence, a divine power absorbing the mind and energies, the sense attached to Enthusiasm has been widened by custom and use to a conceit of extravagant expectation and delusive hope, an unregulated excitement of feeling and mental fervour or zeal, a fanatical passion, so that the term enthusiast has, alas! even come to be by some considered a term of reproach.

But Enthusiasm, begotten of God, nourished by love and hope, educated by perseverance, strengthened by courage, brought to maturity by reason and self-restraint, what a contrast to its caricature Fanaticism, the offspring of superstition, nourished by extravagance and fear, educated by unreason, brought to maturity by frenzy! History, sacred and secular, abounds with examples of the havoc and misery brought upon humanity through fanaticism. Who does not remember the Bible story of the prophets of Baal cutting themselves with knives until the blood gushed out, in order to avert the imaginary anger of an unknown Deity? And similar self-inflictions amongst heathen priests are mentioned by Herodotus and Plutarch as common among the devotees of their temples, the fanatics of *their* day; and again the still more terrible superstition of parents sacrificing their children to Moloch the god of fire. Alas, the cruelties of fanaticism are not confined to the heathen; the horrors wrought by superstition in the days of the Inquisition, and in the course of the many religious persecutions among Christian fanatics that blot the pages of history, are too well known to need repetition here. And even in our own day, among philanthropists, politicians, and others who push their own objects with an unbalanced vehemence, bordering on fanaticism, we too often find a curious disproportion of ideas, a confounding of the relative importance of things, which tends to render their work futile.

But to Enthusiasm, "this favourite virtue of Heaven," as

Isaac Taylor calls it, what does not the world owe in progress, in civilization, in enlightenment? Look at one Figure standing out pre-eminent amongst all others in history, Christ, the Son of the living God, and in Him see the embodiment of the true Enthusiasm.

To arrive at a just estimate of the character of any renowned man, it must be judged by the standards of the time in which he lived, not by the standards of to-day. Indeed by the standards of one century the noblest characters of another century may lose somewhat of their lustre. But the character of Jesus Christ as a whole is unique; it bears judging by the standards of all times, and remains always ideally perfect.

To understand *His Enthusiasm*, however, this must be looked at in the light of the times in which He lived and worked. He worked the greatest revolution the world has seen, yet not with the fanatic's fire and sword. He was not a revolutionist in the ordinary sense of the word. His soul was on fire with the velocity of its movement in the pursuit of one object, the regeneration and salvation of mankind, but it was the fire of the seraph, ever burning but never consuming. His zeal was tempered by a self-restraint, a balance of character too often, alas! lacking in His followers. He shone forth in an atmosphere of befogged morality when selfishness was almost a part of the moral philosophy of the day, due largely to the exaggerated ideas of patriotism then prevailing, for the ancient patriotism and system of ethnical morality, included not only a love of one's own country but a hatred of all others. Plato congratulated the Athenians on having shown, in their relations with Persia, "a pure and heartfelt hatred of the foreign nature" beyond all other Greeks. A sentiment which, had it been given utterance to by any other than Plato, would be stamped as the fanatical bias of a mind hopelessly out of sympathy with all humanity save that existing in its own little corner of the universe.

Compare this sentiment with Christ's law of love through which He sought to raise the feeling of humanity into an Enthusiasm by placing the *love of man as man* distinctly in the list of virtues, thus dissipating the existing cramped and exclusive race prejudices, and giving to selfishness the character of sin. His patriotism comprehended the whole of

God's universe, while for each individual He claimed the rights enforced by justice, equity and love.

In the language of the author of *Ecce Homo*, "An eternal glory has been shed upon the human race by the love Christ bore to it, of this race He Himself was a member, and is it not the best answer to all blasphemers of the species that a human brain was behind His forehead, and a human heart beat in His breast, and that within the whole creation of God He was the most sublime image ever offered to human imagination? He stood forth as the representative of man, He identified Himself with the interests of all human beings, He was destined to lay down His life for them." And this vast passion of love, this devotion so comprehensive, so profound, so deliberate, so elevated, has in a faint degree been imitated by some of His followers, in proportion as they have been possessed by His Enthusiasm.

Few indeed are those to whom it is given to influence future ages, yet some *have* appeared who have been "as levers to uplift the earth, and roll it in another course." Look, for example, at the Apostle Paul, remarkable among men for his intrinsic force of character and intellectual vigour no less than for his sublime Enthusiasm. He was content to suffer the loss of all things, to be buffeted and defamed, to be treated as the off-scouring of the earth, to suffer hunger and thirst, to be houseless to the last years of his life, except indeed when a dungeon was his home, sustained to the end by his Enthusiasm in the cause of his Divine Master.

See again a similar spirit in General Gordon, who in his Enthusiasm of humanity, after refusing earthly wealth, honours and position, finally laid down his life for the Soudanese, whose cause he had taken in hand, and with whose interests he had so nobly identified himself.

And yet again, look at Joan of Arc, that ardent young patriot of whom it has been written that "she was the most adorable character the ages have produced, save one; perhaps the only entirely unselfish person whose name has a place in history. No vestige of self-seeking can be found in any deed and word of hers, she was offered rewards and honours by the king on whose head she placed a crown, but she would accept nothing. All she would crave, if the king would grant it, would be permission to return to her village home and tend

her sheep again; to feel her mother's arms about her, and to be her helper. The selfishness of this unspoiled general of victorious armies, this companion of princes, this idol of a grateful nation, reached but that far and no further." Her Enthusiasm for her country was her supreme power. How this lovely nature was *entheos*—possessed by God—is known to all who have studied her history; and yet not only in her own time but even to this day we find her often branded as a fanatic.

Surely it must be seen that to apply such an epithet—a term carrying with it the reproach of extravagance, selfishness, folly and weakness—to a vigorous mind intent with all Enthusiasm in its truest sense in the pursuit of a substantial and laudable object is "not merely to introduce confusion of ideas but to pour contempt upon what is wholly deserving of respect." The ebb and flow of the senseless insanities of fanaticism, the dejection succeeding its excitement as surely as debility succeeds a fever, have no place nor part in the steady concentrated ardour of true Enthusiasm of the first quality. To raise fallen humanity from degradation, to rescue the oppressed, to save the lost, are enterprises so little recommended by a fair promise of success, that few engage in them who are not fired by what Benjamin Kidd calls "a stern aggressive disciplined enthusiasm."

I suppose the British private soldier of our own day would not by most people be considered a typical enthusiast, yet who that has a soul at all could read unmoved the story related in the *Times* of the sentry in the good ship *Warren Hastings*, wrecked last January off the Mauritius, with hundreds of British troops on board, all brought safely to land in the darkness and danger of that disastrous night? The officer who was told off to see that everybody was out of the vessel before quitting her himself, called aloud from the deck as the ship was rapidly filling, "Is there anybody else below?" when a voice in reply was heard, saying, "Please, sir, may I come up now? the water is getting rather high." On looking down through the hatchway, the officer perceived the man who had orders to remain below as sentry, standing steadfast, unmoveable, up to his neck in water, all the others having gone away.

And what shall I more say? for time would fail me to call

to mind the heroes and heroines, the poets also, the prophets and warriors, the high-tempered spirits, the giants of human nature, who through force of mind, courage and perseverance, have won the day for nations as for individuals, when all other hearts but their own were faint, and who against hope believed in hope when others desponded.

There is truly a glowing splendour, a gladness in the air that the enthusiast breathes, which carries him on to victory.

Turning now to less heroic things, the influence of Enthusiasm is no less marked in intellectual pursuits and achievements. What but Enthusiasm in its best sense could have led to the creations and results that are seen and heard in art? It was not a selfish ambition or desire for fame that inspired genius to give to the world in language without words, but "to heart and soul distinct, intense," such music as that of Beethoven, Handel, Schubert, Bach, and the other great masters whose music has found an abiding-place in the hearts of men and women. It was rather an absorbing, passionate love of their art, as such, that in giving full play to their emotions led these inspired souls to give utterance to their otherwise imprisoned thoughts in music which entrances and refines the spirit of mankind. The beauty of all their creations was all in all to them, and they desired that others should recognize what Keats calls

"The eternal law,
That first in Beauty should be first in Might."

In Scripture and in painting, too, it was the inborn love of form and colour that led such men as Michael Angelo, Canova, Raphael, Velasquez, Andrea del Sarto, Turner, &c., &c., to the enthusiastic pursuit of their art which gave to the world their ideals of beauty. No vainglorious love of fame could have carried them on to the realization of their ideals through laborious years of disappointment, failure, poverty and discouragement. It was the desire, born of a pure and true Enthusiasm that others might see in their God-given art what they themselves saw, and in seeing, love as they loved.

I cannot pass from the realms of art without an allusion to the kingdom of poetry, as the one in which perhaps in its purest sense the spirit of Enthusiasm dwells, the Entheos—the God in man, and from whence there seems to come at times a golden light over life as from Paradise. Indeed, poetry, as

Palgrave tells us, "gives treasures more golden than gold, leading us in higher and healthier ways than those of the world, and revealing to us the secrets of nature. Like the fabled fountain of the Azores, the magic of this art confers on each period of life its own appropriate blessing, on youth, experience; on maturity, calm; on age, youthfulness."

And of the Sovereign of this kingdom, the man in whom is the spirit of the gods, *the Poet*, what shall we say? Listen to the voice of one who reigns in that mysterious realm.

"He sits above the clang and dust of time
With the world's secret trembling on his lip.
He asks not converse nor companionship
In the cold starlight where thou canst not climb.

"The undelivered tidings in his breast
Suffer him not to rest.
He sees afar the immemorable throng
And binds the scattered ages with a song."*

I desire emphatically to impress on parents and teachers of the young the need of cultivating this divine Enthusiasm of hope and love in their own souls.

"Lord! purge our eyes to see
Within each seed a tree,
Within the glowing egg a bird,
Within the shroud a butterfly,
Till, taught aright we see
In all Thy creatures—Thee."†

When the prophet Isaiah foretold the birth of the Saviour of the world in those well-known and memorable words, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given," he speaks in the present tense, although the prophecy was uttered 700 years before its fulfilment, and he adds, "Thou hast multiplied the nations; thou hast increased their joy; they joy before Thee according to the joy in harvest."‡ Why does the prophet talk of the joy of harvest, when only the little tender bud of green is visible? Because harvest is the consummation of desire, and the true seer—prophet and poet, though he knows it not—looking beyond intermediate conditions, sees from the beginning the fruition of his highest hopes and earnest desires as an accomplished fact, which, although to most eyes are hidden from sight by the long vista of intervening years, yet to him becomes a near reality through a pathway of light, shining more and more unto the perfect day.

* William Watson.

† Christina Rossetti.

‡ Isaiah ix. 3, R.V.

We rejoice in the birth of a child, not so much for what it is at its birth, but because of what we hope for in its future, because we see in it the germ mayhap of a great destiny, and of usefulness and blessing to all around it. And as great thoughts precede great results, so great expectations must be formed in the training of children if we would have great realities. Even if we meet with some barren spots in young hearts hardened by neglect, and in which the weeds of bad habits have taken root, let us, as Paul the Enthusiast tells us, plough in hope. Yet ploughing alone is but a disturbance of the soil, and since in nature no operation stands by itself, so ploughing is but one link in a chain of processes whose successive operations culminate in the full development of the seed; it is the first step towards the harvest when plougher, sower and reaper share one common joy.

True Enthusiasm is thus far-seeing in hope and effort, and the teacher who works in the power of it will ever press forward through difficulty and discouragement, knowing that whatever is undertaken in the sovereign power of love will be no failure in the end, for love—that greatest thing in the world—can never fail.

I conceive it also to be of vital importance that Enthusiasm should be encouraged in the young from the earliest days: let them learn that without *the Entheos*, the God in them, they would be as nothing.

"Teach them how they must put their whole being into action to arrive at the fulness of their measure, and to become altogether spirit-men and women."*

Father—mother—let it be with your child as it was with the Universe—"In the beginning—God."

As George Romanes truly says, "It is what we understand by a man's moral and spiritual qualities that go to constitute character, and it is astonishing how in all walks of life, it is character that tells in the long run." Whatever will, therefore, best lead them away from the self-seeking in any and every form, which perhaps more than all besides tends to stunt the development of character in the young, is what we need to instil into the minds we seek to guide and educate. We must seize upon the natural feeling of humanity that exists in every human being, and develop it into that spirit which

* Kirchberger, 1797.

received the new name of Love, showing them what true self-denial is.

"But alas! from the world in this wintry day
This lovely secret seems passing away."

and we often find the young too prone to consider that Enthusiasm is what is popularly called "bad form." Yet Christ who had compassion on infirmities, and could bear with deficiencies, had neither part nor lot with those whose characters were destitute of Enthusiasm. To love God with all the heart, and every human being as yourself, here lies the passionate Enthusiasm for goodness which absorbs and annuls all evil desires, so that right action comes first, naturally and easily, as the only course; and no internal struggle is needed to enforce it. The old maxim, "second thoughts are best," has no place here.

"'Tis a fire that will burn what thou can'st not pass over,
'Tis a lightning that breaks away all bars to love
'Tis a sunbeam the secrets of God to discover,
'Tis the wing to sustain us, the wing of the dove."*

Nothing but the Enthusiasm of divine inspiration can attempt such a work as this: nothing but the magic presence of Christ within the soul can carry it out. Let us, then, as wise master-builders, lay a true foundation, and take good heed how we build thereon; so that our daughters may be "as corner stones polished after the similitude of a palace." Let us have eyes to see "within each seed a tree," so that our sons may be as "plants grown up in their youth" to well-portioned goodly trees, whose branches shall spread around in beauty and symmetry, bringing forth fruit in due season for the joy and the healing of the nations.

"But the lack of desire is the ill of all ills,
Many thousands through it the dark pathway have trod.
The balsam, the wine of predestinate wills
Is a jubilant pining and longing for God.
Oh, none honors God like the thirst of desire,
Nor possesses the heart so completely with Him;
For it burns the world out with the swift vase of fire,
And fills life with good works till it runs o'er the brim."*

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."—
Ecclesiastes ix. 10.

* Faber.